



Supersystems

Ever think the best PCs are beyond you? Just because you don't have a grand to spare, it doesn't mean you have to make do. We test nine dynamic systems that exceed expectation without costing the earth

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Every year PCs get better, acquiring power and exciting new features. Once they were mere platforms for running office software, but now they can be multimedia supersystems on which you download, edit and store a wide range of video, audio and image files.

The most exciting new systems can work as personal video recorders, saving television broadcasts at high quality and offering greater convenience. You can also use them to turn home videos into DVDs or just to watch the latest Hollywood blockbusters in surround sound.

The fastest PCs play games whose graphics and sound surpass those of modern games consoles.

What's more, you don't have to pay an astronomical sum to get your hands on one of these supersystems. When we approached manufacturers for computers to include in this review, we demanded PCs that fulfil all the latest multimedia requirements without breaking the bank. The nine PCs in this review cost just £799 including VAT and delivery. Among them are several high-performance gaming PCs and a neat living room entertainment system. Over the next few pages, you're sure to find the perfect PC.



CHOOSING A... £799 SUPERSYSTEM

An all-round supersystem is only as super as the sum of its parts. If you want the best PC for your money, decide what your priorities are and buy a system to match. In this guide, we show you what to look out for

This Labs test proves that you can now get a superb PC for just £799 including VAT and delivery. Every PC in this group is capable of running office software and surfing the internet. Many are capable of playing the latest games, while others are stronger at video editing or media centre functions. If you consider how you will use your new PC, you should be able to find the perfect fit without spending a penny more.

MONITOR MATTERS

The monitor is usually the most expensive single part of any PC system. At this price, you should not accept a bad monitor.

If you want to manipulate photographs on your PC, you should look for a screen with accurate colour reproduction and a nice clean white. Tiny's Samsung monitor is the best example here. If you want to play games then one of the 17" 16ms screens included by most manufacturers here should suffice. However, the 19" Philips monitor included by NetHighStreet is way ahead of its rivals.

PERIPHERAL VISION

A decent mouse and keyboard are essential to any PC system; the wrong set will lead to frustration and discomfort. Most of the input peripherals provided this month are up to the standard we would expect. Three stand out, though. PC Nextday provides a deluxe Microsoft set with padded wrist rest and tilting scroll wheel, while Tiny and HP provide sub-standard sets that should be avoided.

There is a wide range of speakers on test as well. Five of the systems include Creative 5.1 surround-sound speaker sets, while three come with the superior Inspire range. These produce excellent results with games and DVD movies. However, they do need to be set up properly to produce the full effect, a job that may involve trailing wires around your desk.

▼ A decent keyboard and mouse is a vital part of any PC



▲ Larger screens make playing games and TV viewing a better experience

WHAT A PERFORMANCE

The PCs here are more than capable of performing day-to-day tasks at a brisk pace, such as handling email and office applications, web browsing and managing digital images or music files. If you require lots of power for intensive or repetitive tasks, the most impressive PCs on test are the Tiny and PC Nextday systems. Tiny's PC is particularly suited to video-editing work, where it outperformed the other systems by a considerable margin.

Gaming performance is dictated chiefly by the processor and graphics card. The current mid-range card of choice is the nVidia GeForce 6600GT. This performs far better than ATI's equivalent, the Radeon X600 Pro. Five systems here include GeForce 6600GT-based cards, and each is powerful enough to do justice to the latest 3D games.

Gamers should also consider the speakers and monitor that are included with their system. Our greyscale transition test is useful when ascertaining a monitor's ability to display the complex dark tones found in games such as Doom 3, so pay close attention to our comments on monitor quality in each review.

STORE WARS

Most of the systems on test have similar storage components. Large, fast Serial ATA (SATA) hard disks, ranging from 160GB to 250GB, are fitted to each PC. The difference between 160GB and 250GB won't matter to many users. However, you may find it useful if you have a TV card and record lots of programmes. For the ultimate in storage, look to CCL's DreamTheatre, which has 660GB of hard disk space.

All the PCs here have double-layer DVD writers that can read and write all the common formats of DVD and CD. Some have additional DVD-ROM drives, allowing you to copy quickly from disc to disc. Two have optical drives, which are also handy, allowing you to spend less time swapping discs.

UNDER COVER

Warranties are very hard to judge in a review. Those that seem identical on paper can provide quite different levels of support in practice. We prefer to see PCs supplied with onsite warranty cover for at least the first year. If you're relatively new to PC ownership, it's worth looking for a manufacturer that provides extensive telephone support, with a phone line that's open over the weekend.

The best warranty here is Evesham's. This includes three years of cover, the first two years onsite. The best telephone support times come from Tiny, which is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and only shuts on Christmas Day.

EXTRA FEATURES

Several of the PCs in this group include extra features that help them stand out from other systems with a similar specification. Several manufacturers provided TV tuner cards, allowing you to watch and record analogue or Freeview TV programmes. CCL went further still, providing a Media Center Edition PC system designed to sit under your television. It'll either be exactly what you need for your home, or entirely unsuitable.

PC Nextday included a multifunction peripheral (MFP) with its PC system. This neat little device can print, copy and scan documents, and should be useful to most PC users.



▲ Remote controls are handy if you plan to use your PC for playing music or viewing digital photos, videos or TV



CARRERA Octan 3400AIW

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Watford 08700 270900

DETAILS www.savastore.com

Carrera's PC is a flashy system with some interesting components inside and out.

FEATURES

Carrera's black and silver Cooler Master case looks impressive and the whole system feels well built. Inside it has more drive bays and space than you will ever need.

The Xerox monitor continues the colour scheme. The monitor's glass front looks great but attracts fingerprints. It performed well in our image quality tests. The other peripherals are uninspiring but functional: the Microsoft keyboard and mouse feel solid and responsive, and the 2.1 stereo speakers provide enough bass for gaming or watching DVDs.

Carrera has also included an ATI All-In-Wonder graphics card with TV tuner and remote control, making this an excellent entertainment PC. However, it works only with analogue TV signals, so you won't get Freeview channels.

PERFORMANCE

The Octan 3400AIW scored a respectable 106 overall in our application benchmarks and will easily run most Windows applications. The ATI Radeon X800 graphics card is the fastest in this group and powered its way through our standard Doom 3 test at 65.7fps. For a harder test we increased the screen resolution to 1,280x1,024 and turned the detail option up to the Ultra setting. The Octan ran this test at 42.3fps, which suggests that gamers won't need to upgrade its graphics card for some time. This is just as well, as it uses the older AGP standard and could prove hard to replace in the long run.

VERDICT

The Octan's excellent 3D performance and stylish case make it a compelling choice for those who want a new PC to play games. It's a shame that Carrera hasn't chosen a graphics card based on the newer PCI Express standard.

✓ Very good 3D performance and entertainment features

✗ AGP graphics slot, only one optical drive and 160GB disk space

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3400+ processor, 512MB RAM, 160GB hard disk, 256MB ATI Radeon X800 All-In-Wonder graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, 17" LCD



CCL DreamTheatre One

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER CCL Computers 01274 471201

DETAILS www.cclonline.com

Jung wrote, "A dream is a theatre in which the dreamer is himself the scene, the player, the prompter, the producer, the author, the public and the critic". The DreamTheatre is equally versatile.

FEATURES

CCL's silver set-top box chassis should fit neatly into the space your video or DVD player currently occupies. It feels sturdy but is quite heavy, so don't put it on top of anything else.

The DreamTheatre comes with no monitor or speakers, so you need to link it up to your TV. The Windows XP Media Center Edition operating system works fine through a CRT TV but shines when connected to an LCD TV's high-resolution PC input. You can control it using its cordless keyboard and mouse or remote control.

As a video recorder the DreamTheatre is outstanding. It has a digital TV tuner, so you can watch and record Freeview channels. Media Center provides the best interface around for recording TV, and the massive 660GB hard disk can handle more than 200 hours of recording. We were glad to see that the DreamTheatre's warranty includes a year of onsite cover.

PERFORMANCE

A Media Center PC is unlikely to be used extensively for normal computing activities, but the DreamTheatre can handle office and internet work easily. It scored 100 in our benchmarks.

Media Center PCs are rarely good for games, as the small cases can't cope with the heat that powerful graphics cards produce. The DreamTheatre is no exception. Its nVidia GeForce 6200 graphics card ran Doom 3 at just 5.7fps.

VERDICT

The DreamTheatre isn't particularly powerful, but its digital tuner and huge hard disks make it a great video recorder. As long as you've got a suitable screen, this is a fabulous living room PC.

✓ A great Media Center PC with masses of storage

✗ No monitor; poor 3D performance

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3000+ processor, 1GB RAM, 1x160GB and 2x250GB hard disks, 128MB nVidia GeForce 6200 graphics, DVD+/-RW DL



EVESHAM AXIS 64 GTR

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Evesham 08701 609500

DETAILS www.evesham.com

Evesham's Axis 64 GTR is well built but not particularly fast for Windows applications. Still, it's a good choice if you want a decent warranty.

FEATURES

We grew tired of the Evesham's 'splat' case design some time ago, but it's well constructed with loads of space inside. The motherboard includes all the ports and connectors you could ever need.

The ViewSonic VX715 monitor is one of the more attractive displays on test. At its default settings, it provides great contrast for excellent text clarity. Unfortunately, its performance in both our colour wheel and greyscale tests was average, showing a little banding in both.

A decent Microsoft keyboard and mouse and a Creative 5.1 surround-sound speaker set are included. Two optical drives and a 200GB hard disk provide all the storage you could want. Evesham's warranty is the best in this group, with two years of onsite cover and a technical support helpline that is open all day on Saturday as well as during the week.

PERFORMANCE

The AXIS 64 GTR proved rather disappointing in Windows applications. It scored 99 in our *Shopper* application benchmarks, which isn't great at this price. If you only want to browse the internet, send emails and touch up the odd photo, though, you probably won't notice.

It performed better in our gaming tests. The nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics card is the best mid-range card available at the moment and scored 42.2fps in Doom 3. While it isn't that fast, the latest games should run smoothly.

VERDICT

The Axis 64 GTR is well built, but it's a mediocre performer in Windows applications. If you value peace of mind over performance, though, Evesham's great warranty makes it a solid buy.

✓ Decent monitor, great warranty

✗ Not particularly powerful

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3200+ processor, 512MB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 128MB nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, DVD-ROM, 17" LCD



HP Compaq Presario SR1440UK

RATING ★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER HP 0845 270 4222

DETAILS www.hp.co.uk

HP's Compaq Presario looks smart, but it's not good for gaming and its keyboard and mouse leave much to be desired.

FEATURES

The Compaq's grey and black chassis looks very smart. The motherboard is based on ATI's Xpress 200 chipset and supports all the necessary ports and slots.

The monitor is an ageing 25ms model that isn't ideal for games or movies. It's accomplished in all other respects, though, giving a clean white with even backlighting. It displayed our colour wheel and greyscale transitions without banding.

The other peripherals are disappointing. The keyboard feels spongy, and the mouse uses an old-fashioned ball rather than an optical sensor. The system also comes without speakers.

However, the Presario includes two DVD drives and a massive 250GB hard disk, so there's plenty of room for storing media files. The warranty isn't so great, though. You get only one year of collect-and-return cover.

PERFORMANCE

The Presario's Athlon 64 3400+ processor and 1GB of RAM help to produce an impressive score of 118 in our image manipulation benchmark. Its performance in our other tests was average, producing an overall score of 105.

The nVidia GeForce 6200 graphics card slowed to a crawl during our Doom 3 test, running at 6.1fps. With the resolution reduced to 800x600 and detail set to medium it ran at 33.3fps. Still, gamers should look elsewhere.

VERDICT

The Presario performs well in Windows and its monitor produces clear still images. But the quality of its input devices and 3D performance are unsatisfactory, and you can buy better.



Good monitor and large hard disk



Slow graphics card and DVD writer; poor peripherals

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3400+ processor, 1GB RAM, 250GB hard disk, 64MB nVidia 6200 Turbocache graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, DVD-ROM, 17" LCD



MESH Matrix Eclipse TVX

RATING ★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Mesh Computers 08700 464747

DETAILS www.meshcomputers.com

Mesh's Matrix Eclipse has as good a specification as Evesham's PC and is built to the same high standard, but its monitor isn't up to scratch.

FEATURES

Most Mesh PCs we've seen have been built into a sturdy, no-nonsense black case. The Matrix Eclipse comes in the same case, but it has a cheap-looking silver grille on the front, which is not an improvement in our opinion. But it's what's inside that counts. Mesh has installed a well-specified Asus motherboard, and the entire system feels very well made.

Given the 200GB hard disk and twin Sony optical drives, you'll never be short of storage options. Mesh has also included a digital TV card. Using the bundled remote control and software you can watch, record and pause any of the available Freeview channels.

The ViewSonic VE710b monitor is a bit of a let down, though. It displayed obvious banding in our greyscale gradient and colour wheel tests, and produced a poor white in our brightness test.

The Mesh comes with a great warranty, which provides a year of onsite cover and two further years of return-to-base (RTB) service.

PERFORMANCE

The Matrix Eclipse scored just 98 in our benchmarks, putting it at the bottom of our 2D performance table. It's fine for most day-to-day tasks, but anyone with ambitious video-editing plans should look elsewhere. The system ran our Doom 3 test at 43.6fps. This score is in line with those of the other PCs that use the nVidia 6600GT graphics processor, and suggests that the Eclipse has enough 3D power to run the latest games.

VERDICT

The Matrix Eclipse has a similar core specification to other systems here and comes with a useful TV tuner, but its monitor is poor.



Digital TV tuner; high-quality components



Poor monitor

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3200+ processor, 512MB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 128MB nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, DVD-ROM, 17" LCD



NETHIGHSTREET NET CS 799

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER NetHighStreet 08700 271339

DETAILS www.nethighstreet.com

The monitor is the focal point of any multimedia system, and the Net CS 799 is the only system in this group to have a 19" LCD screen.

FEATURES

The first thing that strikes you about the Net CS 799 is its large, silver 19" Philips monitor. It operates at the same 1,280x1,024 resolution as the 17" LCDs, but the extra screen area makes small text easier to read. Games become more immersive too. Picture quality is fine, with great colour and text clarity, but some banding was evident during our greyscale gradient test.

The chassis and motherboard are nothing special, but the case has plenty of room for upgrades. A generous 200GB hard disk is included, as are a double-layer DVD writer, floppy disk drive and memory card reader. A set of Creative 5.1 surround sound speakers and a Microsoft keyboard and mouse round off a quality package.

The warranty provided doesn't include onsite cover, but you get two years of RTB service. NetHighStreet's telephone support lines are not open over the weekend, though.

PERFORMANCE

The NET CS 799 produced the third best score in our *Shopper* application benchmarks. Its overall score of 111 in our benchmarks is impressive, and just eight points behind the fastest here.

Five of the PCs on test use nVidia's GeForce 6600GT graphics processor, and of these the NET CS 799 produced the second best result. Our Doom 3 test ran at a very playable 45fps and looked great on the 19" monitor, which has a response time of 12ms.

VERDICT

The 19" monitor certainly helps the NET CS 799 system stand out, and there are no major flaws. Only its limited warranty and lack of extra components keep it from the top spot.



19" monitor



No onsite warranty or FireWire ports

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3400+ processor, 512MB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 128MB nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, 19" LCD



PC NEXTDAY

Zoostorm Athlon 64 3400+ Family PC Package



RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER PC Nextday

DETAILS www.pcnextday.com

It may not look that great at first glance, but the Zoostorm's performance and multifunction peripheral set it apart from the rest.

FEATURES

PC Nextday has included the HP PSC 1215, a multifunction peripheral that can print, scan and copy. It received five stars in *What's New, Shopper* January 2005 and is still in our *Hotlist* of recommended products.

The other peripherals are equally impressive. There's a capable Creative 2.1 speaker set, a webcam and a great Microsoft wireless desktop set that includes a mouse with a tilting scroll wheel. The 200GB hard disk has plenty of room for media files, and you get two optical drives, a memory card reader and a floppy disk drive.

Sadly, the monitor is a bit of a let-down. Its backlight is uneven across the screen, giving murky whites at the top and bottom. It passed our text clarity and greyscale transition tests but displayed banding in our colour wheel tests.

The warranty is also disappointing, with just one year of cover and a helpline that's open only from Monday to Friday. First-time PC buyers might want better support.

PERFORMANCE

The Zoostorm provides amazing performance for the price. It scored 119 overall in our benchmarks and its 1GB of memory produced a massive score of 128 in the image manipulation test. It ran our Doom 3 test at 53.9fps. This is a little behind the X800-equipped Carrera but is still enough to power through today's 3D games.

VERDICT

The Zoostorm provides the best peripherals in this group and the best performance in Windows applications. If you don't mind the limited warranty cover, it's the best system here.

✓ Good Windows and 3D performance; multifunction peripheral

✗ Poor warranty

SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3400+ processor, 1GB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 128MB nVidia GeForce 6600GT graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, DVD-ROM, 17" LCD



TINY

PCI 630RE E10270

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £798 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Tiny 08708 303164

DETAILS www.tiny.com

Tiny's 630RE is the only system to use an Intel Pentium processor. Sadly, the peripherals included are sub-standard.

FEATURES

The monitor supplied with Tiny's PC is a pleasant surprise. It produced the clearest and brightest white of any monitor on test without requiring any manual adjustment. It was equally impressive in our other tests, displaying all our test images with precision.

The other peripherals are less inspiring. Tiny's standard keyboard and mouse feel unresponsive and lightweight and, strangely, no speakers are included. This is particularly galling as Tiny has added a digital TV tuner. It receives Freeview channels and lets you pause or record programmes, but it's not much use without sound. Recorded programmes can be stored on the roomy 200GB hard disk or burnt to DVD. The Tiny lacks onsite warranty cover but comes with three years of RTB cover and 24/7 phone help.

PERFORMANCE

Tiny's Pentium 4 630 processor was better than AMD's Athlon 64 processors at video encoding and other maths-intensive tasks, but slower at memory-intensive tasks such as photo manipulation. It scored 112 overall in our benchmarks, ahead of every system except the PC Nextday Zoostorm.

Unfortunately, its ATI Radeon X600 Pro graphics card is nowhere near as powerful. It ran our Doom 3 test at 12.1fps making it less capable of playing the latest games than most of the other systems on test.

VERDICT

Tiny's PC performs well in Windows and its monitor is great, but its keyboard and mouse are poor and its digital TV card is of little use without speakers. Most users – certainly anyone who is interested in playing games – can do better.

✓ Great monitor; great application performance

✗ Lacks 3D power; no speakers

SPECIFICATIONS Intel Pentium 4 630 processor, 1GB RAM, 200GB hard disk, 256MB ATI Radeon X600 Pro graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, DVD-ROM, 17" LCD



WATFORD

Performa 5601

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £799 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Watford 08700 270900

DETAILS www.savastore.com

Watford's Performa 5601 is a decent PC trapped inside an unappealing case.

FEATURES

Watford's Performa 5601 comes in a particularly ugly case. It is shrouded in an unappealing coloured plastic and is best hidden under your desk. The ECS motherboard inside is a better choice, although it lacks luxury items such as digital audio outputs. The Athlon 64 3500+ processor is one of the fastest in the group but is held back by a paltry 512MB of RAM.

The system's Sharp monitor is far more attractive, with a grey and silver colour scheme. It performed well throughout our tests, showing particularly smooth transitions in the colour wheel test pattern. It's one of the better screens in this group.

Watford has included a Microsoft mouse and keyboard, plus a Creative 5.1 surround sound speaker set. The software bundle is more generous than most and includes Microsoft's Works Suite and a selection of last year's games.

The 160GB hard disk included is one of the smallest in the group. Watford's warranty is impressive, though, and provides a year of onsite cover and telephone support on Saturday mornings as well as during the week.

PERFORMANCE

Despite having one of the fastest processors in the group, the Performa produced an unremarkable score of 105 in our application benchmarks. It ran our Doom 3 test at 43.3fps, so it should be able to run the latest games without any problems. These results place it squarely in the middle of the group.

VERDICT

The Performa is a decent PC with average performance and a good monitor. The ugly case aside, though, only its warranty makes it stand out from the rest. Not bad, but average.

✓ A decent monitor and a great warranty

✗ Unattractive case; lacks FireWire and disk space

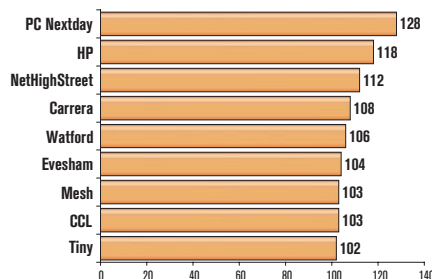
SPECIFICATIONS AMD Athlon 64 3500+ processor, 512MB RAM, 160GB hard disk, 128MB Nvidia GeForce 6600GT graphics, DVD+/-RW DL, 17" LCD



BENCHMARKS

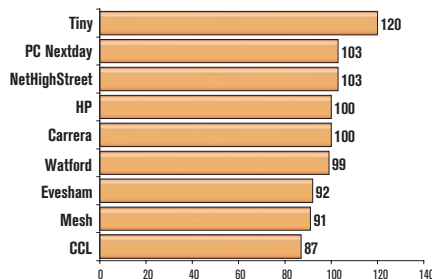
2D Performance **Shopper application tests**

Image-Editing Test



SETTINGS We run our application tests at 1,024x768 resolution and in 32-bit colour
WEB www.computershopper.co.uk

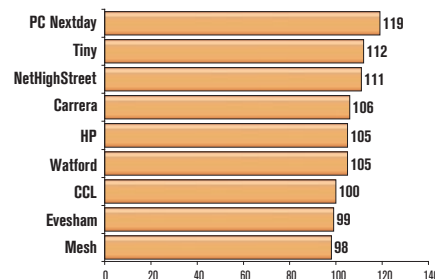
Video-Encoding Test



Computer Shopper's 2D benchmarks are designed to show how PCs stand up to the toughest tasks Windows can throw at them. Today's PCs have no problem running office applications such as Word and Excel, so we chose to focus our tests on areas where you could experience difficulties.

In version 1.0 there are three scripts. Our image-editing test simulates a session of photo enhancement using Paint Shop Pro, culminating with the memory-intensive composition of a

Overall

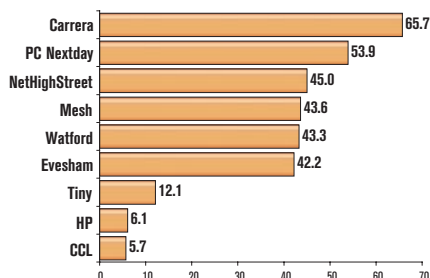


panorama from a set of digital snaps. Encoding a short video to MPEG-2 format is an extremely processor-intensive task, and one that anyone interested in transferring home videos to DVD will have to tackle. Finally, a set of MP3s is generated by ripping an audio CD.

We compiled the tests with the help of our sister magazine for performance computing, *Custom PC*. Figures are relative to a reference Evesham Athlon 64 3500+ system, which scores 100 in all tests.

3D Performance **Doom 3/3DMark03**

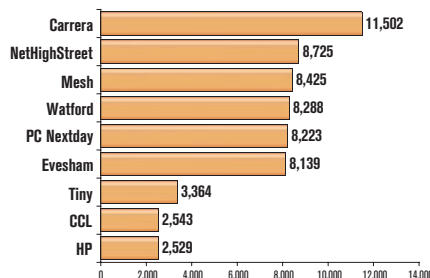
Doom 3 (fps)



SETTINGS 1,024x768 resolution, high quality, 4x AA
WEB www.doom3.com

We run a timed demo in Doom 3 to test whether a PC has the power needed to play cutting-edge 3D games with ease. A good score here means that it should cope with any graphically intense 3D game.

3DMark03

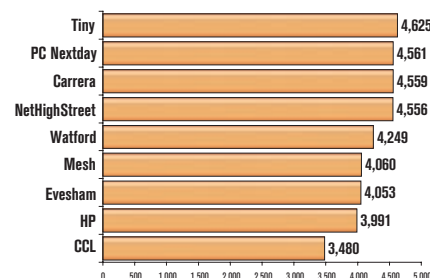


SETTINGS 1,024x768 resolution, 32-bit colour, default settings
WEB www.futuremark.com

3DMark03 is Futuremark's 3D benchmark. It comprises four game tests from four different genres. The workload is representative of games coming on to the market now.

PCMark04

PCMark04



SETTINGS 1,024x768 resolution, 32-bit colour, default settings
WEB www.futuremark.com

As well as our own benchmarks we test all desktop and notebook PCs using Futuremark's PCMark04. You can download a free version of this benchmark from www.futuremark.com/download.

LABS VERDICT **SUPERSYSTEMS**

It's clear that £799 can buy you an excellent PC system these days. Of the nine computers on test this month, though, four stand out.

PC Nextday's Zoostorm is an excellent all-rounder. It produced the best score in our application benchmarks and has enough 3D power to storm through the latest games. It even comes with a multifunction peripheral. Despite its mediocre warranty, it's the best system here and thoroughly deserves our Best Buy award.

If you're after a PC that gives you peace of mind, you should consider Evesham's Axis 64 GTR. It's not particularly powerful, but it's well built and comes with a superb warranty.

If your main priority is gaming, you need to look beyond our 3D benchmarks and opt for the NetHighStreet system. It's not the fastest PC, but it's got plenty of 3D power and a superb 19" LCD, which makes games more immersive. But if you'd prefer to lounge in the living room, CCL's DreamTheatre makes a superb, if expensive, video recorder. **CS**

PC NEXTDAY
Zoostorm Athlon 64
3400+ Family
PC Package





MANUFACTURER	CARRERA	CCL	EVESHAM	HP
Model name	Carrera Octan 3400AIW	DreamTheatre One	Axis 64 GTR	Compaq Presario SR1440UK
Rating	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
Processor	AMD Athlon 64 3400+	AMD Athlon 64 3000+	AMD Athlon 64 3200+	AMD Athlon 64 3400+
Processor speed	2.4GHz	2GHz	2GHz	2.2GHz
Processor socket	Socket 754	Socket 754	Socket 939	Socket 939
Level I cache	128KB	128KB	128KB	128KB
Level II cache	512KB	512KB	512KB	512KB
Memory installed	512MB	1GB	512MB	1GB
Memory type	PC3200	PC3200	PC3200	PC3200
Maximum memory	2GB	2GB	4GB	2GB
Motherboard	MSI K8TM-ILSR	Biostar K8VGA-M	MSI K8N Neo4 Platinum	Information not disclosed
Motherboard chipset	Via K8T800	Via K8M800	nVidia nForce4	ATI Radeon Xpress 200P
Memory bus speed	200MHz	200MHz	200MHz	200MHz
BIOS type	AMI	Award	Award	Award
PORTS				
USB2 ports (front/rear)	2/4	4/4	2/4	3/4
FireWire ports (front/rear)	1/1	1/1	1/1	1/1
Networking	10/100	10/100	10/100/1000	10/100
Legacy ports	Parallel, 2x PS/2, Serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2, Serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2, Serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2
INTERNAL EXPANSION				
Case	Midi tower	Set-top box	Midi tower	Mini tower
Case size (HxWxD)	438x200x480mm	106x429x419mm	443x227x501mm	392x180x415mm
PCI (free)	3 (1)	2 (0)	4 (2)	3 (1)
PCIe x1 (free)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (0)
PCIe x16 (free)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)
AGP (free)	1 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Serial ATA (free)	2 (1)	2 (0)	8 (7)	4 (3)
Memory (free)	2 (1)	2 (0)	4 (2)	4 (2)
Drive bays 3½" (free)	5 (3)	3 (0)	5 (4)	4 (2)
Drive bays 5¼" (free)	5 (4)	1 (0)	4 (2)	2 (0)
HARD DISK				
Model	Hitachi Deskstar 7K250 160GB (HDS722516VLSA80)	1x 160GB Samsung Spinpoint (SP1204N), 2x 250GB Seagate Barracuda 7200.8 (ST3250823AS)	Western Digital Caviar SE (WD2000JD)	Seagate Barracuda 7200.8 (ST3250823AS)
Interface	SATA 150	1x ATA, 2x SATA 150	SATA 150	SATA 150
Capacity	160GB	1x 160GB, 2x 250GB (660GB total)	200GB	250GB
Spin speed	7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm
GRAPHICS				
Technology	AGP	AGP	PCI Express	PCI Express
Graphics card	ATI X800 All-In-Wonder	nVidia GeForce 6200	Leadtek Winfast PX6600 GT TDH	nVidia GeForce 6200 Turbocache
Graphics chipset	ATI Radeon X800	nVidia GeForce 6200	nVidia GeForce 6600GT	nVidia GeForce 6200
Graphics memory	256MB	128MB	128MB	64MB
Graphics/video ports	DVI, D-sub, SCART, RF in/out, composite in/out, S-video in/out, line in/out	DVI, D-sub, S-video out, composite out	DVI, D-sub, S-video out, composite out	DVI, D-sub, S-video out, composite out
SOUND				
Sound card	Realtek ALC655	Creative Audigy 2 ZS	Realtek ALC850	Realtek
Sound card outputs	5.1 line out	7.1 line out, coaxial S/PDIF minijack digital out	7.1 line out, coaxial S/PDIF out, optical S/PDIF out	5.1 line out, coaxial S/PDIF out
Speakers	Mentor Sub-woofer System 2.1	None	Creative Inspire P5800 5.1	Monitor speakers only
REMOVABLE DRIVES				
Floppy drive 3½"	Yes	No	No	No
Memory card reader	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, Multimedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive	No	No	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, Multimedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, xD
Optical drives	NEC ND3520A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 4X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 48X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD-ROM)	Sony DW-D26A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 8X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 48X CD-R, 48X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	Sony DW-D23A (16X DVD+R, 12X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 40X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM), Sony DDU 1613 (16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	LG GWA4161B (16X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 4X DVD+RW, 4X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 40X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 40X CD-ROM), Samsung SD-616 (16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)
DISPLAY				
Size and technology	17" LCD	N/A	17" LCD	17" LCD
Model	Xerox XA7-17	N/A	ViewSonic VX715	Compaq FP7317
Pixel response time	16ms	N/A	16ms	25ms
Inputs	Captive D-sub	N/A	DVI, D-sub	Captive D-sub, line in
OTHER HARDWARE				
Modem	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Keyboard	Microsoft Basic Optical Mouse 1.0A	Logitech Cordless Internet Pro	Microsoft Basic Optical Mouse 1.0A	HP PS/2 Keyboard
Mouse	Microsoft Basic Keyboard 1.0A	Logitech Cordless Optical Mouse	Microsoft Basic Keyboard 1.0A	HP PS/2 Mouse
Keyboard/mouse rating	3	4	3	2
Extras		Hauppauge DVB-T MCE Digital TV Card, Microsoft MCE remote control		
SOFTWARE				
Software included	Microsoft Works 8, PowerDVD 5, Roxio CD/DVD suite 7, Panda Antivirus Titanium 2004	Power DVD 6	E-trust EZ Antivirus 7, Microsoft Works 8, Roxio Easy Media Creator Basic DVD 7, Sonic Cineplayer 2, Adobe Reader 6	Microsoft Works 8, Intervideo WinDVD Creator, Sonic RecordNow CD/DVD, Moviemaker 2, Intervideo WinDVD
Operating system	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Media Center Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition
Operating system restore option	Restore CD and partition	Windows CD	Restore CD	Restore CD and partition
BUYING INFORMATION				
Parts warranty	One year onsite	One year onsite	First and second year onsite, third year RTB	One year collect and return
Labour warranty	Five years RTB	Three years RTB	First and second year onsite, third year RTB	One year collect and return
Technical support times	9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat	9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9-4pm Sat	9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat	8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat
Company founded	1972	1995	1983	1939
Technical support staff	20	10	83	Not disclosed
Employees	130	80+	419	Not disclosed
Price including delivery and VAT	£799	£799	£799	£799
Price including delivery excluding VAT	£680	£680	£680	£680
Contact	Watford Electronics	CCL Computers	Evesham	HP
Phone	08700 270900	01274 471201	08701 609500	0845 270 4222
Web	www.savastore.com	www.cclonline.com	www.evesham.com	www.hp.co.uk



MESH	NETHIGHSTREET	PC NEXTDAY	TINY	WATFORD
Matrix Eclipse TVX	NET CS 799	Zoostorm Athlon 64 3400+ Family PC Package	Tiny PCI 630RE E10270	Performa 5601
★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★
AMD Athlon 64 3200+	AMD Athlon 64 3400+	AMD Athlon 64 3400+	Intel Pentium 4 630	AMD Athlon 64 3500+
2GHz	2.4GHz	2.4GHz	3GHz	2.2GHz
Socket 939	Socket 754	Socket 754	Socket 775	Socket 939
128KB	128KB	128KB	16KB	128KB
512KB	512KB	512KB	2MB	512KB
512MB	512MB	1GB	1GB	512MB
PC3200	PC3200	PC3200	PC3200	PC3200
4GB	2GB	3GB	4GB	4GB
A8N-SLI nForce4	MSI K8N Neo 3	ECS nForce 4-A754	FIC 915PD1	ECS NFORCE4-A939
nVidia nForce4	nVidia nForce 4	nVidia nForce 4	Intel 915P	nVidia nForce 4
200MHz	200MHz	200MHz	200MHz	200MHz
Award	Award	Award	Award	Award
2/6	2/6	3/4	2/4	2/6
0/1	0/0	0/3	0/2	0/0
10/100/1000	10/100	10/100	10/100	10/100/1000
Parallel, 2x PS/2, Serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2, Serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2, Serial	Parallel, 2x PS/2	Parallel, 2x PS/2, serial
Midi tower	Midi tower	Midi tower	Midi tower	Midi tower
472x207x450mm	428x179x470mm	432x213x458mm	433x190x442mm	435x188x485mm
3 (1)	3 (2)	3 (1)	3 (0)	3 (0)
2 (0)	1 (1)	2 (2)	0 (0)	2 (2)
2 (1)	1 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)
0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
8 (7)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (3)
4 (2)	2 (1)	3 (2)	4 (2)	4 (2)
4 (2)	6 (4)	3 (1)	4 (1)	5 (3)
3 (1)	4 (3)	3 (1)	3 (1)	4 (3)
Maxtor DiamondMax 10 (6B200M0)	Maxtor DiamondMax 10 (6B200M0)	Maxtor DiamondMax Plus 9 (6Y200M0)	Western Digital Caviar SE (WD2000JD)	Hitachi Deskstar 7K250 (HDS722516VLSA80)
SATA 150	SATA 150	SATA 150	SATA 150	SATA 150
200GB	200GB	200GB	200GB	160GB
7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm	7,200rpm
PCI Express	PCI Express	PCI Express	PCI Express	PCI Express
Leadtek Winfast PX6600 GT TDH	Asus N6600GT	Inno 3D 6600GT PCI-X	Sapphire X600 Pro	GeForce 6600GT
nVidia GeForce 6600GT	nVidia GeForce 6600GT	nVidia GeForce 6600GT	ATI Radeon X600 Pro	nVidia GeForce 6600GT
128MB	128MB	128MB	256MB	128MB
DVI, D-sub, S-video out, composite out	DVI, D-sub, S-video out, composite out	DVI, D-sub, S-video out, composite out	DVI, D-sub, S-video out, composite out	DVI, D-sub, S-video out, composite out
nVidia MCP04	Realtek ALC655	Realtek ALC655	Realtek ALC880	Realtek ALC655
7.1 line out, coaxial S/PDIF out, optical S/PDIF out	5.1 line out	5.1 line out	7.1 line out	5.1 line out
Creative Inspire P5800 5.1	Creative Inspire P5800 5.1	Creative SBS 2.1 350	None	Creative SBS 560 5.1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, Multimedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, Multimedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive, xD	CompactFlash, Secure Digital, Multimedia Card, Memory Stick, Smart Media, MicroDrive	No
Sony DW-D26A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 8X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 48X CD-R, 48X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM), Sony DDU 1612 (16X DVD-ROM, 40X CD-ROM)	NEC ND3520A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 4X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 48X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD-ROM)	AOpen DUW1608 (16X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 4X DVD+RW, 4X DVD-RW, 2.4X DVD+R DL, 48X CD-R, 32X CD-RW, 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM), BTC D1648RT (16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	Sony DW-D23A (16X DVD+R, 12X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 40X CD-R, 24X CD-RW 16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM), Sony DDU 1613 (16X DVD-ROM, 48X CD-ROM)	NEC ND3520A (16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 4X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 48X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X DVD, 48X CD-ROM)
17" LCD	19" LCD	17" LCD	17" LCD	17" LCD
ViewSonic VE710b	Philips 190S	ADI S700	Samsung 710V	Sharp LL172AB
16ms	12ms	16ms	16ms	16ms
Captive D-sub	D-sub	D-sub	D-sub	D-sub, line in
Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Logitech Cordless Internet Pro	Microsoft Digital Media Keyboard 1.0A	Microsoft Wireless Comfort Keyboard 1.0A	Tiny Internet Keyboard	Microsoft Basic Optical Mouse 1.0A
Logitech Cordless Optical Mouse	Wheel Mouse Optical 1.1A	Microsoft Wireless Optical Mouse 2.0A	Tiny Optical Mouse	Microsoft Basic Keyboard 1.0A
4	3	5	2	3
Digital Black Gold TV capture card with remote control and software		HP PSC 1215 multifunctional peripheral (printer, scanner, copier), Speed i640 webcam	Avermedia DVB-T 771 Digital TV card	
Microsoft Works 8, Cyberlink 5 (Power2Go 4, Powerproducer 3, PowerDirector 3, Mediashow SE, PowerDVD Copy, Power Cinema 4)	Power DVD 5, Nero OEM suite, Norton Internet Security 2005	E Trust EZ Antivirus 2005, Nero 6, Power DVD 5	Microsoft Works 8, Cyberlink suite 2004	Microsoft Works Suite 2005 (Works 8, Word 2002, Streets&Trips, Money, Pictureit!, Encarta), Roxio CD/DVD burning suite 7, Power DVD 5, Panda Antivirus 2004, Far Cry, Splinter Cell, Downtown Run
Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition	Windows XP Home Edition
Windows CD	Windows CD	Windows CD	Restore CD and partition	Restore CD and partition
First year onsite, second and third years RTB	Two years RTB	One year collect and return, three years onsite on monitor, one year onsite on printer	Three years RTB	One year onsite
First year onsite, second and third years RTB	Three years RTB	One year collect and return, three years onsite on monitor, one year onsite on printer	Three years RTB	Five years RTB
9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri	11am-5pm Mon-Fri	9am-6pm Mon-Fri	24/7	9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat
1987	2000	1993	1987	1972
42	3	3	400+	20
275	Not disclosed	68	1,800	130
£799	£799	£799	£799	£799
£680	£680	£680	£679	£680
Mesh Computers	Net-highStreet.com	PC Nextday	Tiny.com	Watford Electronics
08700 464747	08700 271339	Internet Only	08708 303164	08700 270900
www.meshcomputers.com	www.nethighstreet.com	www.pcnextday.co.uk	www.tiny.com	www.savastore.com